

# ALRESFORD DISPLAYED No 7



GOLF CLUB  
FOOTPATHS  
CHILDREN'S HOME  
MEDICINE IN  
ALRESFORD



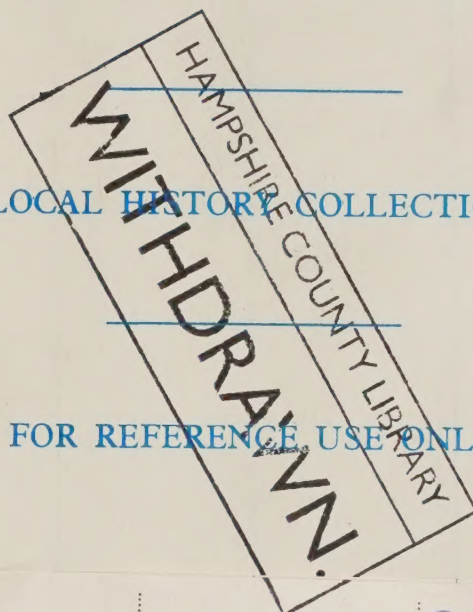




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ALRESFORD DISPLAYED - NO.7

Paper No.26 ALRESFORD GOLF CLUB, 1890 - 1939

Paper No.27 PATHS AROUND ALRESFORD

Paper No.28 MEDICINE IN ALRESFORD

Paper No.29 THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME,  
OLD ALRESFORD

Illustrated by James Longlands - Edited by Jack Orr

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EDITORIAL

As you will see 'Alresford Displayed' has a new editor. Digby Grist sets out below his thanks to those who have helped him, but we of the working party cannot let the occasion pass without expressing our lasting gratitude to him. His enthusiasm, encouragement, and constant support have made this enterprise possible. It will be very difficult to follow him, but fortunately we shall still have his help in the background.

JACK ORR

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Regretfully I must give up the editorship of 'Alresford Displayed'. When, seven years ago, I produced the first number I did it out of affection for Alresford and Isabel Sanderson, Freda Kelsall and Brian Gush helped me by providing material because they had the same feeling for the town, never dreaming that we would still be publishing in 1982. Through these years I have been supported by a vast number of people who have given their time and talent towards the enterprise; some distinguished writers, others committing themselves to print for the first time but all recognising that it was worth doing.

The names of those who have helped me are spread through the past numbers. In particular, I should like to mention Isabel Sanderson who has seldom allowed me to 'imagine' what the past must have been like; John Adams who has faithfully recorded the deliberations of the working party since the beginning; Jim Longlands, whose drawings have embellished the magazine and Jack Orr, who has been one of us from nearly the start and who has gallantly accepted the editorship. At least we launch him with a good number.

DIGBY GRIST

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A Short History

Part One

1890 to 1939

By Robert Hedges (Hon. Secretary, 1953 - 1973)

Alresford Golf Club is well established and well known, popular and prosperous. In recent years especially it has been fortunate in having dedicated trustees, captains, committees and staff who have responded admirably to the tremendous challenge of mounting pressure from a new and enthusiastic golfing public. With a playing membership of over 400 and increasing numbers of visitors, the club can look back with interest and gratitude to those who founded and fostered it many years ago. But when was this, and who were they?

At a time when most of its columns were devoted to matters of Church, State and the Administration of Justice rather than to parochial affairs, the Hampshire Chronicle of 22nd November, 1890 reported that the Alresford Golf Club Cup had been won by Dr. D.W. Moore and that there had been a very close contest for second place between the Rev. C.H. Conybeare (Rural Dean and Vicar of Itchen Stoke) and Mr. J. Ridley Shield (solicitor, of Alresford). This seems to be the earliest reference to the club and 1890 may well have been the year of its foundation.

The late Mr. G.E.R. Shield used to say that his father and Dr. Moore were founder members and that the best golf in those days was played between early autumn and mid-spring when the Down had been well grazed and the grass was becoming or was still semi-dormant. He had a very old scrap of paper on which were listed the assets of the club at an early date: a mower with box, a roller, a hole cutter, 7 rings, 8 iron numbers, 4 leather horse-shoes and £16/12/2.

For some reason not divulged by Mr. Shield the club suffered a temporary closure at the end of the century. Patriotic though they always were in these parts, it is unlikely that enthusiastic enlistment for the Boer War could have left this fatal vacuum, for as early as 25th March, 1900 a small group of interested and influential people met and resolved "that the Alresford Golf Club be re-started". They amended the old local rules, honoured old debts and charged old and new members alike an entrance fee of 5/- and subscription of £1/1/-. Visitors might play at the rate of 9 holes for 6d but only if resident more than 6 miles from Tichborne Down and if playing with a member; so for non-members there was no easy access to the course.



Neither the dissolution nor the resolution was reported in the local press, but the club was small and select and under no moral obligation to publish anything. In fact it could have presented few attractions. The unguarded greens were but small, featureless oases in a wilderness of hazards; for the 30 or so members, representing rank, the professions and high respectability, were forced to make their toilsome way along narrow, ill-cut "lines" close to tangles of old grass, bushes, hurdles, troughs, horse-jumps and other appurtenances of rural sport and animal husbandry; and never were they far from the sight, sound and smell of sheep.

The 100-acre expanse of Tichborne Down had by long tradition shared with The Nythe on the Bighton Road the distinction of being a venue for occasions minor and major, when the sheep would be folded away and the good townsfolk of Alresford would foregather either to celebrate an event in the local calendar or to discharge their quota of national rejoicing. The Cricketers' Arms, just across the road at the bottom of Sun Hill, had for over a century witnessed scenes of congratulation and commiseration after cricket matches on the Down and the Hambledon Hunt had held annual race meetings there. But golf was soon to become established to the gradual exclusion of other activities.

Despite these depredations and intrusions the Down was thronged with bird life, wild flowers grew in random profusion and a wide variety of chalk-land trees and shrubs completed a perfect setting. Today the course is immaculate and practice areas have been provided, but there is no semblance of formality or artificiality and members can still enjoy the beauty of their surroundings; indeed, during the past two decades the club has carefully preserved the seedling oaks that are now flourishing and forming a new fringe of woodland from the 9th fairway to the Cheriton Road. It may be true that most golfers have no eye for natural splendour (unless of course they happen to be playing particularly well) and that their faculties are totally directed to the task of thrashing, urging and coaxing the ball economically to its final hole; and while there are everywhere some light-hearted golfers there is no doubt that many regard the aggregate of their bad shots as an important part of life's adversity.

The gentlemen of the newly-constituted club took a room at the Cricketers' Arms for which they paid the landlord, Mr. Charles Young (the father of any other Youngs mentioned hereafter), £3/3/- a year including cleaning and firing; and the charge remained the same when the new tenant, Mr. Fred Freemantle (a former opening batsman for Tichborne Park who had long threatened to extinguish the art of bowling in mid-Hampshire), offered them an upstairs room with a view over the first and last holes. For the ladies, however, there was still no room at the inn.

Until this time work on the course had been carried out by a succession of local men working part-time with a hired horse, though Sir Henry Tichborne (1866-1910), the president and landowner, had sent over his gardeners and machinery whenever a special onslaught was necessary.



But there had been no expert service or advice and the club now decided to remedy this. On 24th March, 1907 there appeared in the Hampshire Chronicle an announcement from the hon. secretary, Mr. Bryce McMaster, manager of the Union of London and Smith's (now National Westminster) Bank, Alresford informing readers that the club had secured the services of Mr. Charles Marks of the Woking Golf Club, who would as professional give lessons and sell and repair golfing equipment and as greenkeeper apply himself to the task of improving the course. Mr. McMaster would "be happy to give every information to ladies and gentlemen desirous of joining the club".

It is obvious that the appointment of Mr. Marks had committed the club to greater expenditure and that income from new members would be the only means of meeting this necessity. There was no question, however, of open flood-gates and a free-for-all. The club continued to be highly discriminating in its admittance of new members, and Mr. T.C. Hankin, the young proprietor of the Swan Hotel (and prospective father of Mr. C.A. Hankin, J.P.), was entreated not to mention the club in his hotel advertising. Furthermore, travel was slow in those days, for motorcars were still uncommon, and it may well have been that few eligible people were willing to undertake arduous journeys and then endure a form of martyrdom on a primitive course. So recruitment was perhaps restricted by a process of natural selection.

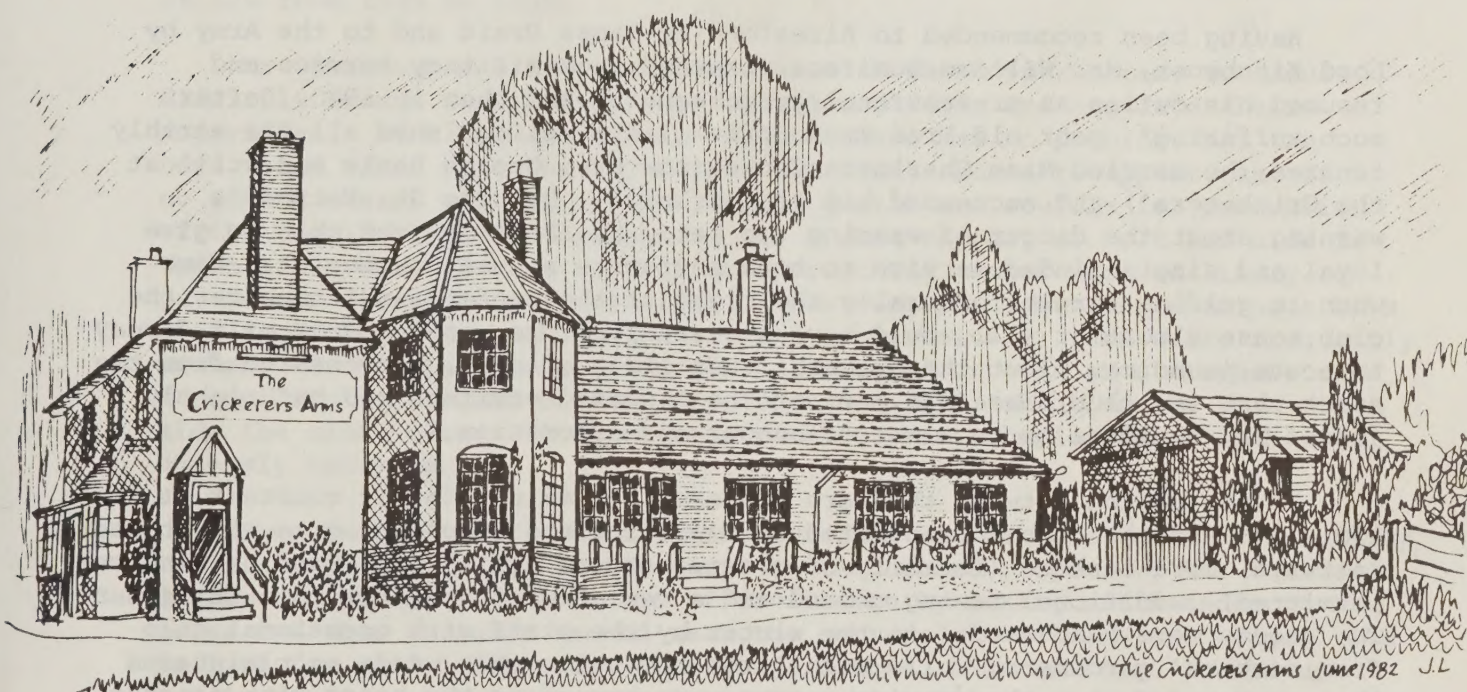
Realising this, the club decided to offer Mr. Stubbs, the farmer tenant of Tichborne Down, a higher amount of rent in return for permission to cut wider areas of grass. At the same time Mr. Marks gave advice on the siting and making of bunkers, and it seemed that the course was at last about to take shape. Then came the news that frustrated the better part of their endeavours. Sir Henry informed the club through his agent Mr. Michie (whose little son Bryan was to become a well-known wireless comedian) that he did not like the idea of having bunkers. Golfers generally will not only feel a wild surge of sympathy with Sir Henry's attitude; they will also be envious of his power to carry it into effect.

For various reasons Mr. Marks found his position with the club increasingly uncongenial. There was insufficient scope for his ability as a professional and he had too much work and too little reward as a greenkeeper. Sir Henry's disapproval and Mr. Stubbs' increasing reluctance to permit the cutting of grass had thwarted the club in its efforts to make rapid progress, and Mr. Marks rightly estimated that his prospects as the employee of the sub-tenant of an uncooperative grazier were well on the dim side of average. His work began to reflect the lack of incentive and eventually he and the club parted company in circumstances of mutual dissatisfaction (after which he was employed by Charles Young, who had become a hire carter).

Meanwhile, just across the road at the old Cricketers' Arms, Civilisation had been advancing with the stealthy inevitability of gradualness. For brewers can not only anticipate and satisfy sudden and serious outbreaks of thirst; they can also draw subtle conclusions from vague trends. Realising that the ancient, well-used horse-and-cart road from Alresford down Sun Hill and on over woody undulations to Bramdean was destined to be superseded by a motor road to Bramdean via Cheriton, they purchased a large plot at the next cross-roads and built the present Cricketers' Arms, attaching a club house with facilities for both ladies and gentlemen; and in 1911 Fred Freemantle made the short journey from the old public house, bringing with him his wife, his stock and chattels and an excellent reputation.



This was a time of tremendous activity. While representatives of the Lion Brewery were successfully resisting attempts by the club to amend the Lease of Club House Agreement with concessionary clauses, a sub-committee was providing lockers, linoleum, lamps, candles, clothes-brushes, the Daily Graphic and other accessories conducive to an atmosphere of cosy domesticity; and on the course itself there was joy unbounded, for the club had acquired the lease, and the new president, Sir Joseph Tichborne (1890-1930), not only approved of bunkers but went so far as to offer the use of additional land to the south of the course for an extension. Soon a "ground" committee had planned the lines of 9 extra holes, and work started with the laying of the greens, supervised by none other than Fred Freemantle.



The 18-holes course was opened in January, 1912, but when war broke out in 1914 the additional land reverted to agricultural use and so it remains today. According to contemporary opinion, quoted by the late Mr. H.C. ("Maurice") Young, the new part had no special character and any challenge it presented was not so much to golfing skills as to the stamina of reluctant pedestrians. Nevertheless, it had been a remarkable achievement by a few generous and devoted members, but any shadow of regret at the loss became insignificant under the dark cloud of national danger.



This had been a period of patient consolidation. Led during Edwardian times by Col. H. Stratton Bates, Mr. W.H. Hunt, Mr. J. Ridley Shield and Mr. E.E. Snow, the club completed the peaceful penetration of Tichborne Down and by 1911, after 20 years, it had acquired the tenancy of an extended area of over 150 acres. Perhaps the townsfolk of Alresford resented the curtailment and eventually the loss of their "right" (countenanced by kindly Tichbornes and their earlier tenants except in the shooting season) to encroach upon the Down; perhaps they felt that a golfing area of that size was disproportionately large for the sole use of 60-odd members playing occasionally. It is difficult to say. Of course the Down (in the parish of Tichborne) is nearly a mile from the centre of Alresford; but in those more leisurely days before Time and Motion became associated objects of close scrutiny a walk of less than 20 minutes was probably as lightly regarded as is a drive of less than 2 minutes today. Could there have been an element of compensation in Col. Stratton Bates' magnificent gift of a recreation ground to Alresford in 1910?

Having been recommended to Alresford by James Braid and to the Army by Lord Kitchener, Mr. William Boniface returned from military service and resumed his duties as professional/greenkeeper; and when in 1920, "after much suffering", poor old Fred Freemantle gladly relinquished all his earthly tenures, he married Miss Charlotte Cooke (now Mrs. George Banks and still at the Cricketers') and succeeded him as landlord. Despite St. Matthew's warning about the danger of wearing two hats, Mr. Boniface was able to give loyal and single-minded service to both masters - no easy matter at a time when in golfing circles generally the right of the professional to enter the club house almost at will would have aroused feelings ranging from mild dismay to acute jaundice. (But the brewers, infallible as ever, had ensured from the start that the club house was part of the licensed premises and had rightly judged Mr. Boniface to be a man of honour and discretion.)

In the period between the wars membership remained fairly constant at 120 - 140 and the club concentrated on improving the 9-holes course with better fairways, more bunkers (formerly of grass, but now filled with sand as finances permitted), additional teeing ground and a replacement 5th (now the 6th) green. The greens were hand-weeded in the winter by the staff with occasional help from members' gardeners, while such large but vulnerable weeds as plaintains that appeared during the growing season were burned to the heart with pinches of sulphate of ammonia.

From 1923 the fairways were cut with a 30-inch Dennis motor mower, and a second (36-inch) Dennis was purchased in 1930; but the greens were cut with hand mowers until 1934, when Mr. E.E. Snow, the hon. treasurer, reluctantly agreed that a 14-inch Enfield motor mower was essential. Mr. Boniface used his own one-horse-power tractor, fuelled with oats and chaff, for transporting materials about the course. Peggy and her traces have long since disappeared, but the pony's chaff-cutter was still in the stable loft at the Cricketers' in January, 1982. It was not until 1937 that the club acquired a mechanical tractor and gang mowers. The staff trimmed bunker surrounds with reap-hooks and used scythes under trees and bushes, and whenever the semi-rough became too rank Mr. T.E. Bennett went in with the side-cutter from his adjoining farm.



Mr. Snow served as hon. treasurer from 1907 to 1943, and according to members of the ground staff at the time - Mr. A.E. Dedman, Mr. H. ("Curly") Young and Mr. W.F. Sawyer - he watched every farthing. Nor was he merely passive during his long vigil. When some subscriptions were overdue in 1921 he gained the support of the committee and sent letters to the defaulting members threatening to proceed against them in the County Court unless they paid up within a week. He insisted in 1930 that the new Dennis be delivered without an operator's seat, since its power was to be used for cutting grass "and not for giving an idle man a ride". He made an enormous contribution to the welfare of the club in this difficult period with but little increase in basic income. Had successive premiers from Lloyd George to Neville Chamberlain looked to Alresford Golf Club for indicators of inflation they would have found collectively that a gentleman's subscription remained at £3/3/- from 1920 to 1939, a green fee at 2/- a round from 1919 to 1939 and a caddie's fee at 1/8 from 1925 to 1939.

Mr. Boniface was immensely popular with the boys who came to caddie, difficult though it sometimes was to regiment them and regulate their activities. If a member booked a caddie there was no problem, but the boys would often wait for any member who might chance to appear, and if no caddie master was present they would jostle and scuffle for possession of the bag if (like Sir Joseph) he was a good tipper, or bolt and hide in the nearest wood if they spotted an approaching member who was likely to pay no more than the standard fee. Times were hard, but not even poor boys were inclined to hang about quietly and unobtrusively; and quite frequently members who turned up expecting general decorum or even an atmosphere of tranquillity would find excited boys booting a ball about on the road outside the club house. The committee received many complaints of such unseemly behaviour.

Some caddies developed a liking for golf and members would occasionally catch them having a few crafty shots on the course proper, so Mr. Boniface decided to absorb some of their effervescence by making pitch-and-putt holes for them on spare ground near the entrance. He also encouraged them to look for golf balls, for which he paid them. Now and then a hard-up caddie would be tempted to err in marking his employer's ball in the rough so that he could return later and correct his error in private; and a small group of caddies once conspired to make easy money in the following way.

Mr. Boniface kept a succession of dogs, each called Bruce; and Bruce II, a dog of many parts, was particularly good at retrieving golf balls and devouring chocolate. These caddies thought it a pity that he should pursue each activity as it were in isolation and soon found that for every fragment of chocolate fed to him he would fetch a ball from his master's open cupboard. So Mr. Boniface went on buying his own property until one day Bruce II's strange excitement aroused suspicion and he was arrested, all shining eyes and saliva, at the cupboard door.



The General Strike of 1926, which brought conflict and chaos to many urban areas, impinged but little upon the affairs of the club. However, the committee postponed a special competition in support of the Royal County Hospital Extension Fund, arranged for Saturday, 8th May "in consequence of the strike and the unsettled state of the country". Soon afterwards the caddies, perhaps imbued with hazy notions of a New Democracy, intimated to the committee that they would welcome the lifting of a recent ban on football. Autocracy prevailed.

In 1927 Mr. Boniface persuaded the club to form an artisans' section with Mr. H. Clement as hon. secretary. Membership was limited to 25, many of them former caddies, and elections were controlled by the main committee of the club. The annual subscription was 15/-. They had to give way at all times but could play at will except on competition days. In 1929 a part of Mr. Boniface's shop (the wooden building still standing, though not without effort, near the Cricketers' club house) was partitioned off for use of the artisans, some of whom were destined to become important figures in the club after the war.

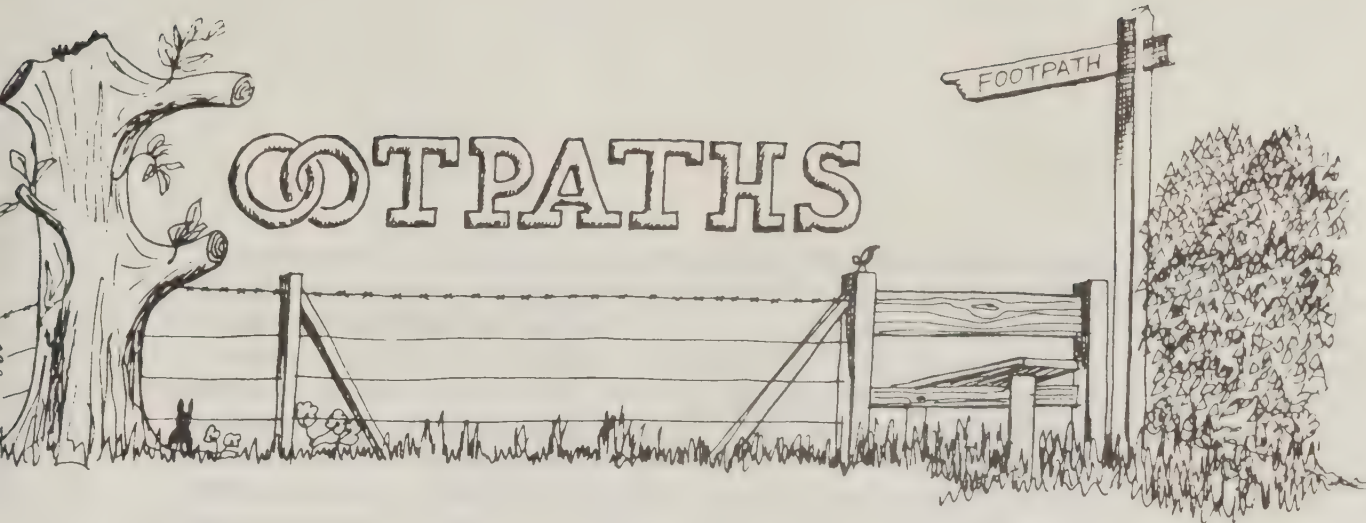
There is only one recorded fatality on the course up to 1939. On 12th April, 1936 Major Eric Loder, a guest at Tichborne House, killed a plover with his tee shot from the 8th and the ball found a bad lie, which, he asserted, cost him the hole and the match. His opponent took the view that nothing less than an albatross could have saved him.

Most prominent among committee members of the very difficult inter-war years were Mr. P. Laming, Capt. N. Zambra, Miss M. Vowles (ladies' hon. secretary), Mr. F. Rowland, Mr. H.F. Ross, Mr. H.F. Martin, Major C. Newport (Hon. secretary) and of course Mr. E.E. Snow.

Finally, although it extends far beyond the period set for this article, it seems appropriate to outline Mr. W.M. (Bill) Young's long and distinguished connection with Alresford Golf Club. Having started as a caddie, he became an artisan member and then in turn a full member, match and competitions secretary, captain and then professional/greenkeeper. He is now - and none more deservedly so - an honorary member.

Can a parallel to his career be found in the annals of any other golf club? Perhaps. But for the time being the question is purely rhetorical.





By Sydney Pullinger

One of the pleasures of living in Alresford is that it is completely surrounded by countryside. Within 10 or 20 minutes, in almost any direction, one can be in the middle of nowhere on some little used footpath or bridleway and the noise and bustle of the town could be a hundred miles away.

Most of these paths are hundreds of years old, some Saxon, Roman and even pre-Roman. This network of tracks grew out of necessity, when poor men walked and rich men rode horses and such slow means of locomotion demanded short cuts to link home with church and work and village with village. Landowners accepted these paths across their land as a necessity for themselves, their tenants and travellers. As advancing civilisation brought faster means of transport many of the tracks were incorporated into a paved road system and most of the rest fell into disuse. But civilisation also brought leisure and pressures and with the coming of the railways and the bicycle the townspeople turned to the countryside for their weekend recreation.

Whilst many landowners were quite happy for their property to be traversed by locals and tenants they were not so willing to accept strangers. As far back as 1835 the Highways Act of that year had stated that footpaths and bridleways were as much highways as paved roads and that law still stands. It laid down specifications for the width and gating of bridleways but said nothing about footpaths. Motor cycles were barred by the Road Traffic Act of 1930. In 1934 the Rights of Way Act stated, with some reservations, that undisputed use of a path for a period of 20 years was sufficient proof that the then owner had dedicated it as a public path and subsequent owners did not have the right to close it. However, the status of many paths remained uncertain and it was not until after the second World War that a serious attempt was made to tie up all the loose ends. In 1949 the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act laid a duty on every County Council to survey and map all paths in its area that might be considered public by virtue of past or permanent use. These paths were to be defined as footpaths, bridleways or Roads Used As Public Paths, the latter commonly referred to as R.U.P.P.s or Green Lanes.



This first survey was a mammoth task involving district and parish councils, voluntary societies and interested individuals. It involved consulting old maps and records, interviewing the "oldest inhabitants" and finally establishing on the ground the lines of paths disused for generations. Every possible path was claimed as a right of way and it was then up to dissenting landowners to prove otherwise. Once all the arguments were settled every path was given a parish number, a statement defining its status, route and condition and placed on a definitive map. Once on the map the path was a legal right-of-way for all time and could only be altered or extinguished after a court hearing where landowner and objectors to the change or closure could state their case.



New Alresford parish is extremely small (approx. one square mile) and is mainly built up so apart from its river walk it has little to offer. However, the surrounding parishes are in comparison very sparsely populated, being in the main farmland. Itchen Stoke to the west and Old Alresford to the north have respectively 9 and 14 miles of rights of way, rather more than their total mileage of paved roads. It is interesting to note that the surrounding countryside has a remarkably consistent ratio of road and path mileage to area, namely two miles of road and rather more track per square mile.



Thus we find that with New Alresford Church as centre and ignoring the many estate roads, within a circle of 3 miles radius there are 55 miles of paved roads and 60 miles of tracks, many wide and spacious, others narrow, ill-defined or invisible on the ground but all available to the walker and in the case of bridleways, for horseriders and cyclists also. The accompanying sketch map shows clearly that while many of the paths have become incorporated into the road system others remain as they always were, long distance and direct routes from village to village. If one walks south out of Alresford along Sun Lane a track starting opposite the old Links Laundry, AAA, continues in almost a straight line to the village of Bramdean. A right fork along this track with a modern slight diversion along a minor road takes one straight to Hinton Ampner, BBB. Compare the directness of these paths with the road. A green lane starting at Upton Farm in the north east corner of Old Alresford, DDD, runs in a straight line almost to Wield, where it meets the road. This track is over 3 miles long, has one minor road crossing, some four houses and a farm along its entire length.

A footpath signpost at the bottom of the Dean causes much comment. It states "Footpath to Wonston and Stockbridge", the latter being some 16 miles away. This path follows the river to the old Eelhouse, crosses into Old Alresford and continues to the bottom of Drove Lane, where begins the old drovers road to Stockbridge, CCC. Much of this old road has disappeared under cultivation and development but within our 3 mile circle it remains much as it always was. It runs northwards from the bottom of Drove Lane along a wide gravel and grass track, crosses the Candover stream and continues north west in a straight line to Itchen Wood, where it joins the road. It crosses the A33 at the Lunways Inn and reverts to its original form.

This first section out of Alresford has two minor road crossings, is some 3½ miles long and has only one cottage along its entire length.

Other tracks leading from Winchester and Itchen Abbas to Abbotstone, EEE, are considered to follow the line of the Saxon roads to London, which joined at Abbotstone from Southampton and Winchester, continuing through Old Alresford, Bighton and Medstead to Alton.

The history of many of these tracks must remain a mystery as any new evidence is unlikely to come to light. What matters to us is that they still exist and they take us into the heart of the countryside. If there is any unspoilt country left in Hampshire today, it will be found along these paths.

#### FOOTNOTE

It is not intended that the sketch map (although to scale - approx. 2½ inches to 1 mile) should serve as a walkers' guide. Its purpose is to show clearly what the detail of a proper map obscures, the vast number of paths available to the countrylover. I have however, put the paths into two categories --o--o--o-- indicates that it is a fairly comfortable path at all times of the year, not obstructed by gates or stiles.



--x--x--x-- indicates that the path is frequently muddy or may be obstructed seasonally by crops, ploughing, nettles, brambles or electric fences.

Many paths are signposted at road junctions. Many are fenced or hedged and are easy to follow. Many lead across fields and through woods, are unenclosed and disappear regularly under the plough and crops. To find and follow these will require a sense of direction and skill with a proper map.

The Ordnance Survey produce two excellent maps. The Landranger Series, Sheet No.185, price £2 covers some 625 square miles of Hampshire, with Winchester as centre. All rights of way are shown with different symbols for footpaths, bridleways and R.U.P.P.s. Scale is 1½ inches to 1 mile.

For those wanting a larger scale, and thus covering a much smaller area, there is the Wayfarer Series (2½ ins. to 1 mile). This series is new and is still incomplete. The sheet covering Alresford should be available this year. For those interested in history there is a great deal of literature in the reference library in Jewry Street, Winchester.

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# *in Alresford*

By Dr. Peter Lyndon-Skeggs

Medicine, and the practice of medicine is not static, but ever evolving. To look at the medical services today in Alresford is only to consider one frame in a cine film. It would be therefore of interest, and for our benefit, to look back to the past, before describing our medical services today and then possibly to look into the future.

I am fortunate for after my thirty years in practice in Alresford I can draw on the memories not only of Doctor Meryon before me, but also Doctor Hodgson before him, who practiced medicine in Alresford from the late years of the 19th century. His contemporary was Doctor Jollye, and judging from my conversations with Doctor Hodgson, their relationship was not always happy. There were then two practices, both single-handed, and covering approximately the same area as our Alresford District cares for today, and strangely with a population little changed. They each had their consulting rooms; Doctor Hodgson in his house, a tiny room surrounded by ten big bottles of medicine. There was no waiting room and he said:- "They waited outside in the road and if it rained they got wet". Almost every ill person who lived outside Alresford had to be visited by the doctor. Occasionally a patient would appear outside the surgery door, collect a bottle of 'gastric mixture', or whatever, and then walk five miles home. Mostly however it was the need for the doctor to visit his patient, on horseback, or by horse trap, with William White to care for the horses; sometimes to spend the night in the patient's house, and then possibly deliver a child, or just prescribe a bottle of medicine which would reach the patient probably via the grocer's van. Hospital amenities were few, and dreaded. An appendix would be removed on the kitchen table, coronary thrombosis treated gallantly at home, and pneumonia treated with cold compresses to the chest, by Doctor Jollye, to the disgust of Doctor Hodgson who preferred a hot poultice.



Prior to the National Health Service one could qualify as a doctor, and sometimes with the lowest of degrees - licentiate member of the Society of Apothecaries - put up a plate in Harley Street, or buy the goodwill of a general practice, or squat. There was a 'squatting' doctor in Preston Candover who lived in the old vicarage.

In 1934 Doctor Leishman took over the practice of Doctor Jollye, and apart from a brief partnership with him he practised on his own until he made Doctor Riley his partner. I replaced Doctor Meryon in 1951, and remained single-handed for two years: and so until then there were two separate practices, and two doctors only. There was no ancillary staff, and wives had to be permanently on duty to answer the telephone. There were fortunately four District Nurses. One, who was an excellent nurse, was almost completely deaf, and it was a trial when she would get on the telephone to say:- "Mrs. White is poorly. Would you go and see her?". One would shout back:- "Which Mrs. White", only to hear her say :- "That's right. Mrs. White", and you were left wondering which of the many, many Mrs. Whites in Alresford was took poorly.

Doctor Leishman made a respectable consulting and waiting room at the back of his house. Doctor Meryon made a surgery in his house, but the room that I used was just a large broom cupboard under the stairs. I could not even stand upright in it.

So the practice of medicine continued until 1968. Doctor Leishman and his partner Doctor Riley working from his surgery in Broad Street. I moved my surgery in 1953 to Cardew House in East Street and took a partner, Doctor Calder, who sadly was to leave me in 1961, to be replaced by Doctor Brill. The district was largely rural, only 3% of the houses outside Alresford having a mains water supply. In the country districts the patients were earthy, perhaps illiterate, but with an extensive knowledge of their natural surroundings. I remember one female, to be nameless, never married but who produced a succession of children. She asked my advice as to the naming of the most recent child, and I suggested 'The Littlest Bastard'; and she thought, and answered:- "I will call him Littlest because I don't know what bastard means". She should have been an authority on the subject.

In 1968 the big change came. The Alresford Group Surgery was built. It was not however until 1969 when Doctor Leishman retired that the two practices united in to one group and 1970 saw the arrival of Doctor Clark.

The difference between a Group Surgery and a Health Centre should be explained. A Group Surgery owns its own premises, whereas a Health Centre is owned by the State, and the practices working from this Centre rent their rooms from the State. There are advantages and disadvantages to both systems. A Group Surgery allows the practice complete autonomy - appointment of staff, redecoration etc. The Group is paid a rental from the State for its premises. The staff is paid by the Group but there is a subsidy towards this. Our Group Surgery has attached to it a Dental Unit and this is rented by the County Authorities.



Since 1948, the year of the inception of the National Health Service, the structure of administration of health services has varied, but still remains enormous. Under the three-tier level of organisation of Sir Keith Joseph there was in 1974:-

1. Ministry of Health
2. Regional Health Authority
3. Area Health Authority
4. District Management Team

This structure has now been replaced and so let us not worry about the varying areas for which each body was responsible.

Today, thank goodness, we have a simpler scheme:-

1. Ministry of Health
2. Regional Health Authority (ours is the Wessex Regional Authority which covers Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight)
3. District Health Authority (Winchester & Central Hampshire)

Doctors are paid in a strange way.

General practitioners are paid by the Family Practitioners Committee, responsible to the Minister of Health, and independent of the District Health Authority.

Hospital Consultants are paid by the Wessex Regional Health Authority.

Registrars and downwards in the hospitals are paid by the District Health Authorities.

The hospitals themselves are provided for through the Regional Health Authority.

I said it was a simpler scheme but it still gives me a headache.

Let us look at our own Medical Practice in Alresford; comfortable, and as efficient as one could wish anywhere.

There are now five Partners, albeit one, Doctor Sheila Thorpe, who is by contract 'half time', but works more than the allotted hours. There is usually a 'trainee doctor' allocated to the practice. This needs explanation. Nowadays if a qualified doctor elects to become a General Practitioner he must undergo so called 'vocational training'. After his one year as a 'houseman' in hospital as a qualified doctor he does a further two years of hospital 'jobs', and in this time he will be attached to various specialities. In the following year he will be allotted to a general practice designated as being competent to train a future general practitioner.



This trainee doctor is therefore in fact already a highly competent doctor.

The practice also undertakes to train unqualified medical students usually from Southampton University. Doctor Thorpe holds a weekly session to train students in Psychiatry.

These five doctors in the practice are paid by the Family Practitioner Committee on the basis of the number of patients in the practice, plus a basic allowance, plus an allowance for being a Group Practice. There are other marginal payments - obstetrics, immunisations, and even an allowance for visiting a patient in anti-social hours - i.e. between 11.00 p.m. and 5.00 a.m.

The Group Practice has an office staff of two secretaries, one nurse, one filing clerk, and four receptionists of which number two are only part-time. There is a surgery cleaner, an angel who appears in the evening after the surgery doors are closed and reappears in the mornings at the break of dawn.

The appointment scheme for patients visiting the surgery is perhaps a blessing for the patient, but it entails an immense effort by the secretarial staff, to arrange the appointment, to record the presence of a patient when he appears, and then to verbally usher him to the doctor. The secretarial staff are involved with the request for 'repeat prescriptions'. These requests put a great strain on them. It is in my opinion sad that a high proportion of these requests are for tranquillizers 'Valium', 'Librium', and the like, and largely from newcomers to the district living in expensive houses, bought on a mortgage demanding the necessity of working overtime, or wife out to work or general stress. Virtually nobody in a natural village such as Preston Candover lives on tranquillizers.

There are five District Nurses attached to the practice, and they are regionalised. (They are now called Community Nurses, but I have never heard the title used.) Of the five District Nurses one is a midwife, and she will very rarely be concerned with the birth of a child at home, but will care for a newly born on his return from hospital.

There are also three Health Visitors, one full-time and two part-time. Their duties are varied and cover such subjects as checks on childrens' health, child development, ante-natal classes and they organise immunisation clinics. They make post-natal visits, and visit the elderly at the request of a doctor.

The Alresford practice is well provided with hospital care, and access to specialists. The Royal Hampshire County Hospital produces much of this care with its established thirty-two Consultants, but those in the Northern region of the practice may go to the Basingstoke District Hospital. A few orthopaedic cases will go to the Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital in Alton.

We are fortunate in Alresford in having Makins Court which looks after the elderly who find the burden of their own homes too much, but Makins Court cannot cope with those who are seriously ill. These latter have to be passed on to St. Paul's Hospital in Winchester, so far away from their life-long homes.

The elderly in their homes have the chance of a home help - partially provided from the budget of the Hampshire County Council. There are about eight to ten of them, and they are wonderful; cleaning, preparing meals or even guiding a blind one for his morning's walk.

Those who are mentally handicapped are housed in Tichborne Down Hospital, but their physical welfare is largely the duty of the Alresford practice. The mentally disturbed, and this includes everybody from manic-depressives to alcoholics are treated at Park Prewett Hospital, Basingstoke.

Probably few in the Alresford district recognise how many amenities are offered by the Alresford medical practice, and these not through any contractual necessity, but out of a sense of duty to the patient, and I suggest as an example the immunisation against 'flu' for those elderly or ill who might be at risk from this disease. The practice has an electrocardiograph, an elaborate device which can record the working of a heart, the possibility of a coronary thrombosis or other cardiac disease. The practice is capable too of so many other investigations - gobbledygook to most but to us known as E.S.R. (estimation of erythrocyte sedimentation rate), blood glucose, haemoglobin etc. It also has a binocular microscope for the detection of fungal infection or for abnormal blood cells etc. These researches can be done in the main surgery but there is a daily courier to the Royal Hampshire County Hospital who collects blood specimens etc. for more specialized investigation.

There are two branch surgeries, at Cheriton and Preston Candover, and these play an important role in the wide working of the practice. The Preston Candover branch surgery was first started by Doctor Hodgson in 1917, when he arranged with Mr. and Mrs. Murphy to use the front rooms of their house, Forge Cottage, on two mornings of the week. On average two to three patients attended this branch surgery but its attendance grew. In 1972 its proportions had grown so much, and sadly Mrs. Murphy was in poor health, that the surgery was moved to the Village Hall. On average now the attendance to this surgery is above fourteen per session. The Cheriton branch surgery is held in the Village Hall but used to be held in a block of stables which once housed a Derby winner.

Alresford is fortunate in having two dispensing chemists. These are open regularly from 9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m., with an extra hour for dispensing drugs from 5.30 - 6.30 p.m. a duty shared weekly by the two chemists.

The Wessex Pharmacy on the corner of Broad Street and West Street is part of the J. Loveridge group. Mr. Good in West Street owns his own business.



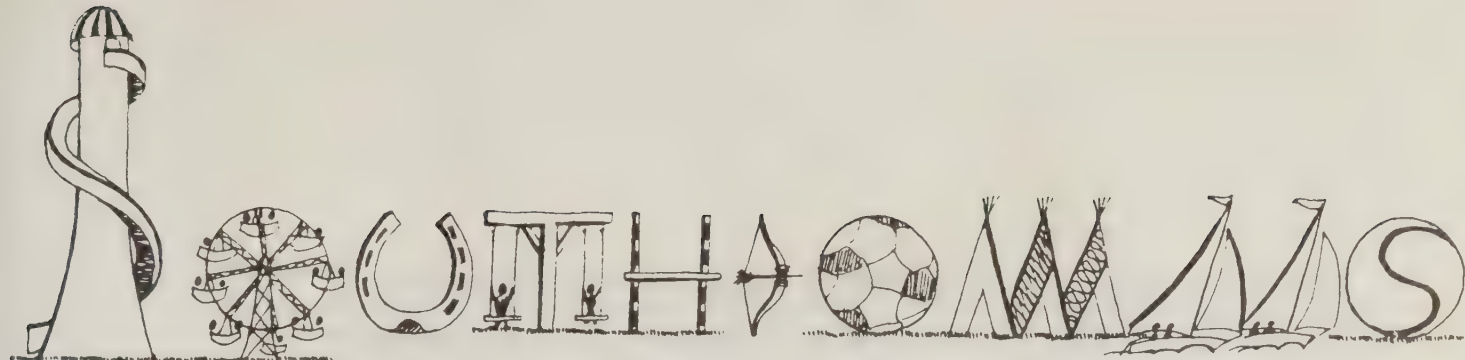
It would be wrong and foolish to compare one of these chemists with the other, for they are both excellent. However we must be grateful to Mr. Good who is always willing to leave his home at Four Marks should an emergency arise requiring a specialised drug. He is also always willing to deliver oxygen equipment direct to the patients home. As treasurer of the 'Alresford Pigs' he raised a large sum of money to contribute towards the cost of the electrocardiogram owned by the surgery.

If there is any fault to be found with our two chemists it is that they both run out of my favourite lime juice at the same time.

Medicine is an evolving art, administered in an evolving world. Drugs change and improve, Cures are found, but further diseases are discovered. Already the Alresford practice has introduced telephone 'bleepers' carried by each doctor. It is planned that the files on patients' illnesses shall be computerised; records ready at the press of a button, and this is good modern sense. I would like to see a little more - a lot more - concern for the aged who can no longer be cared for by the young in their small houses. We need a carefully considered and more extensive geriatric unit in our town.

But when we pause to think quietly, forgetting drugs and medicine, we must remember that life is but a brief pause between a sleep and a sleep: and he who finds in this brief pause fulfilment and an acknowledgement of purpose, is healthy. Germs are such small creatures.

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## THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME, OLD ALRESFORD

### AND THE ONSLOW CONNECTION

By Vincent Pemberton

Take a walk through the village of Old Alresford, past the Church, the village green, a few houses, old and new, the old forge, the almshouses, the little school, and you will see on the right hand side, a large building. It is the National Children's Home, named "Southdowns" and was built about the year 1838, one year after Queen Victoria came to the Throne.

Sometimes it is easy to describe a building, particularly if it has some architectural merit, but this is just a solid two-storied, red brick and flint structure, plainly functional, and well suited for the purpose for which it was built. Strangers passing through the village would not perhaps, give it a second glance, but nevertheless for nearly one hundred years, it has been a centre for the care and upbringing of orphaned and destitute children.

The approach is through an avenue of lime trees, well over one hundred years old. On one side are the tennis courts and the playing field, and on the other, a paddock for grazing. The view from the front entrance of the Home is quite delightful, and apart from the west door of the Church, it would be hard to find anywhere else in the village where one can enjoy a more picturesque prospect of our green and pleasant county, than from this spot.

The Home was built by the Onslow family on their estate as a Home and school for training girls in domestic service, and continued to be so used until the year 1886. Before proceeding further, however, I must endeavour to give you a word picture of this family, and of Upton House, in the Hamlet of Upton, where they lived, and to do this I must go back in time to the middle of the eighteenth century.

Upton House is a mansion built in the Georgian period for James Rodney, brother of the famous Admiral, Lord George Brydges Rodney, and James lived there until the early part of the nineteenth century. It was to this house that Col. Onslow, who was related to the Earl of Onslow, Clandon Park, Guildford, came to live. It has not been possible to ascertain the precise date he decided to settle in the village, and reliance has had to be placed on the early editions of Debrett and Burke's Peerage for what information could be obtained. The family records in the archives of the Guildford Museum only reveal very sketchy details, and in the main, refer to Clandon Park.

It is recorded in Debrett that Col. the Hon. Cranley Onslow, Second Surrey Regt., of Upton House, Old Alresford, married Susannah Elizabeth, daughter of Nathaniel Hillier of Stoke Park, Guildford, Surrey, in the year 1812, and this is confirmed in Burke's peerage and the family records. The Bishop of Winchester performed the ceremony. One can assume, therefore, it was about this date they took up residence.



From the marriage there were five sons and three daughters -

George Augustus	Guildford James	Arthur Edward
Thomas Frederick	Charles Townshend	Susannah Arabella
Elizabeth Harriet	Harriet Charlotte Matilda	

Searches through old records from the beginning of the nineteenth century and for the greater part of that period, have not revealed much information about this family, but here and there one finds a reference, for instance, in the record of Land taxes for Old Alresford, the first mention of Col. Onslow is made in 1830, when Upton House was owned by Edward Fletcher Esq., and occupied by Col. Onslow. These returns showed the tax as £25.13s.3½d. and were not recorded after 1832. It would appear therefore that he only leased the property and did not purchase it until after 1832. In the record of Land Ownership for 1875 Upton House was given as the residence of Miss Arabella Onslow with 217 acres, 3 rods and 10 poles, with a gross estimated rent of £578, and in White's History, Directory and Gazetteer of Hampshire for 1878, Upton House was given as the residence of the Misses Onslow.

When I lived in the village I used to talk to some of the older villagers, who no doubt were passing on information given to them by their forebears, and it does seem that the Onslow family were well respected and took a keen interest in local affairs. Their philanthropic deeds are still in evidence today, as in addition to building the Home for the training of girls in domestic service they also built the almshouses in 1843 and the village school in 1846. The school was later known as the National school, and eventually came under the control of the Church of England. According to White's Directory, it was built at a cost of £700, but no mention is made of the cost of building the almshouses.

It is also mentioned in this directory that in 1855 Matilda Onslow started an Orphanage in New Alresford at No. 50 Broad Street, for children of soldiers killed or maimed in battle, probably the Crimean War, and it was known as the Patriotic Orphan Asylum or Home. Although it was through the efforts of Miss Onslow the Orphanage was founded, its name suggests that support was received from the Patriotic fund set up by Lloyd's of London in the early part of the nineteenth century, and their minute books are preserved at the Head Office.

The Onslow family worshipped in Old Alresford Church and this would be during the Incumbancies of three well known Rectors, Francis North, Earl of Guildford, George Sumner, later to become Bishop of Guildford, and Sir Frederick Currie, Bart. On the north side of the church wall is a memorial to Guildford James Hillier Mainwaring Ellerker Onslow who died in 1882, and another to his two sisters, Susannah Augusta Arabella, who died in 1889, and Charlotte Matilda, who died in 1885. Apart from a few entires in the church registers, there is nothing of interest relating to this distinguished family.

The date the Home finally closed is somewhat obscure, but according to information supplied by the Chief Office of the National Children's Homes, the property was conveyed to the Trustees of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1886 by Miss Arabella Onslow, and in the Hampshire Chronicle for April 1887 there appeared a small item which said the Primitive Methodists had secured the premises lately carried on by Miss Onslow. The building was actually

re-opened as an Orphanage in 1889, and this was due to the initiative of Joseph Peck who felt impelled to do something for orphaned and destitute children. During a recent visit to "Southdowns" I noticed in the Hall a tablet to Joseph Peck, Founder and first Secretary, 1889 - 1890, with the wording, "He went about doing good". There is also a plaque to the memory of Alice Alsford, Matron, and on the wall in the Superintendent's office is a dinner plate, on which is the date, 1889.

When first opened, the Orphanage consisted of one house to which was attached a room serving as a school. At that time one or two of the staff were qualified to teach, but in later years most of the children attended the village school and the room was used for recreational purposes. Intervening years witnessed the erection of new buildings and alterations in various parts of the Estate, and in the course of time it became quite large.



Originally 15 children were accommodated, but later on the number was increased to 30 boys and 30 girls from the age of five upwards, mainly from the south of England. Another branch at Harrogate took in children from the north country. As was customary in those early days there was a measure of segregation, the children only meeting together for prayers and meals. This must have been hard at first, particularly where brothers and sisters were involved, but there were, no doubt, good reasons for introducing this code of strictness, and it must be recognised that these Homes fulfilled a great need in providing not only a haven for the children, but also a sound Christian background, strengthened by the care and devotion of the staff.



There must have been some relaxation in later years, as I understand that in 1919 the boys and girls met on the playing field and in the games room, also during the winter months when magic lantern shows were given to which the village children were always invited. This latter gesture is indicative of the friendly atmosphere which existed between the Orphanage and the village, and is worth noting that on these occasions the visitors were always regaled with a cup of cocoa and a bun for which they paid one penny.

During the years I resided in the village, I was always impressed with the happy and relaxed spirit which existed at "Southdowns" and I cannot recall any time when, if my visit was in mid-morning I was not greeted with an invitation to drink a cup of coffee, or in the afternoon, a cup of tea, a gesture which was much appreciated.

Twelve years after opening, the growth of the Orphanage and the need for more accommodation, led to the addition of a girls dormitory and dining room, and then a boys dormitory. Later came the farm buildings, and in 1932, the "Whittaker" sick wards. The farm was quite a flourishing project and the products from it provided a very useful addition to the kitchen, and of course, an added interest to the children. This development was discontinued many years ago but some of the buildings still remain. A large area at the back of the main building is devoted to growing vegetables, and on a recent walk round, I noticed it was in excellent order.

In 1932 the Primitive Methodists and the Wesleyans joined as one church and the Orphanage at Old Alresford then became one of the National Children's Homes. There are now 56 branches up and down the country, and a school in Jamaica.

When the Orphanage was first opened in 1889 the term "Master" was used, but after 1932 the title was changed and "Superintendent" substituted. As mentioned earlier, children of school age went to the village school, a short distance away, but when their primary education finished, they attended Perin's school in Alresford. As they reached the age when it was possible for them to leave "Southdowns" quite a few went into residential care for ultimate training in farming, industry, domestic service, or H.M. Forces. Some emigrated to Canada and Australia, and were fostered by families in those two countries. It must have been very rewarding to the staff at Old Alresford to receive news of their progress.

I personally know of a boy by name of Harry Horwood, who with his sister Rose, was brought up at the Home, and in after life became quite a public figure in the town of Watford, Hertfordshire. When old enough to leave "Southdowns" he started work on the railways as a clerk, but later on, took employment with another firm. At the age of 22 he was elected to the Watford Borough Council and in 1938/9 became Mayor. He was made an Alderman and in 1957/8 was elected Mayor for the second time. He sat on the Watford Bench as a Magistrate for many years, and 1959 was awarded the O.B.E. and given the freedom of the Borough. He was on the Board of Governors of the Watford Grammar school and had many other interests in the town. His sister, Rose, came back to the Home as a member of staff, but later went into domestic service. Another boy, Lawrence Norman, is now Superintendent of one of the National Children's Homes at Painswick, Glos. There must of course, be many others, and I would not for one moment lead anyone to think I was only dealing with two cases in isolation.

It would be appropriate here, to quote from an article written by J. Gilbert Powell which appeared in an issue of the National Children's Home, after a visit to Old Alresford in 1938.

"I sometimes used to wonder whether it was a good thing to bring up children in a Branch in the country, now I feel inclined to argue that nothing could be better. Provided most of the necessities for the proper upbringing are available, the country must infinitely be preferable for such work as that in which the Children's Home is engaged. Away from the distractions of city or suburban life, there is a chance for a child to grow - a chance which perhaps it has never been able to enjoy - It is not infrequently that a child who is accepted into the Home has never known what it is to be quiet, or to have a satisfying meal, or an uninterrupted night's sleep in a comfortable bed. Quite apart from these considerations there are others, equally important, into which it is not necessary to enter here. Suffice to say, one thought of some of these when one read on the wall of the room in which the girls were having their tea (and where the whole Branch, staff, girls and boys, gather for prayer) these words,

THIS IS THE AGE OF SPEED BUT NOBODY  
HAS YET CAUGHT UP TO THE MAN WHO SAID  
"FOLLOW ME"

I came away from Old Alresford feeling that whilst it was good to forget the tragic circumstances from which many of the children had come - death, desertion and domestic dereliction, - it was perhaps just as good to recall them occasionally and as a comparison, so that one could rejoice the more that in spite of their unhappy beginnings, they were now responding to the love and devotion of those into whose care they had been committed."

This is only part of a graphic story of life at the Home, and I am very grateful to the Rev. Gordon Barritt, Principal of the National Children's Homes for allowing me to reproduce it.

The outbreak of the second world war caused a few upheavals, one being at the Home at Alverstoke, which was in an area scheduled as "Dangerous area No.1" and the children had to be evacuated. This resulted in Old Alresford being packed to capacity with 74 children which must have presented quite a problem for the staff, but I have no doubt that all difficulties were overcome with the cheerfulness and devotion which was so much a part of "Southdowns".

In 1909 a lady by name of Mary Yolland began her work at Farnham for the care of children. After her death, the National Children's Homes took over the premises, but it soon became clear that a more modern house was required. In 1959/60 therefore, it was decided to sell it and use the money to provide an extension at Old Alresford to be known as the "Mary Yolland" house. The building was completed in 1961 and opened by Sir Adrian Boult, a Vice President. Two cottages adjacent to the main building, were erected for the use of the staff, one in the 1930's and the other in 1959.



After the second world war Mr. E.J. Alsford followed his parents as Superintendent and his wife as Matron. It was then that the decision was taken to reduce the intake to 48 children, divided into Houses, each being under the supervision of a member of staff. Thus the old arrangement of segregation was finally abandoned. The new system seemed to have worked extremely well right up to 1978 when most of the children were dispersed due to major alterations about to be commenced. During this time however, the building was not entirely closed, about six children remaining. The work was finished in 1979, and in conversation with Mr. Pease, the Superintendent, I gathered that whilst it would still retain its title of the National Children's Home, it would also be known as the Group 2 Community Home, and could be described as a specialised Home for the care of girls and boys for whom other care had been inappropriate. The total capacity is now 28, most of the girls and boys having a separate room, and in accordance with past practice, the younger ones go to the village school and the older ones to Perin's school in Alresford. After leaving school they stay on at "Southdowns" until employment is found for them, and I understood that some success has been achieved in this direction.

One important factor, relating to the decrease in the intake of children over the years, is that whereas, years ago, the ratio of staff to children was very low it is now much higher. Children living in an N.C.H. Branch receive much more individualised care and attention than might have been the case in the old days, when one member of staff may have been looking after as many as twenty five children. They are also on average, much older, although in fact, the age spread at Old Alresford at present is very wide, being from five to seventeen years. All children are placed there by the local Authorities in the South of England, one exception being a boy from the Channel Islands. Each boy or girl is paid for by the Authority concerned, but capital developments and various items are met out of N.C.H. funds. The need is therefore as great as ever, as it is from this income that the pioneering work with children and families in the community is able to be carried out.

Finance has always been a very important consideration, and it is to the everlasting credit of the founders of the Orphanage, later the National Children's Homes, and the countless people who so generously gave their support that capital was, and still is, forthcoming. Funds have always been raised by voluntary means, such as Church collections, gifts, flag days and house to house collections, garden parties and bazaars, and is allocated by the Chief Office to each Branch according to its needs.

In addition to the fund raising efforts mentioned, a fete is held each year on the playing field at Old Alresford, supported by various organisations in the area. This not only gives visitors an opportunity of showing their appreciation for the work carried out at "Southdowns" but it is also a meeting place for old friends, and very often, girls and boys who have previously been at the Home.

I have endeavoured to give you a brief outline of "Southdowns" and perhaps it would be a fitting end to this article if mention were made of a group of people who have formed an association called "The Winchester and District Friends of the National Children's Home, Old Alresford. Their objective is to support the Home in all areas of its work, and because it is not infrequently that social and other activities have to be curtailed due to a shortage of money, fund raising will be an important element. More vital, however, is the need for providing a local source of help to the staff, for example, visiting a sick child in Hospital, driving the mini-bus, assisting at the annual fete, career information, etc.

The Association's activities will involve both the Winchester and Alresford Districts in its future drives for fund raising and membership, and the Superintendent at Old Alresford, will willingly supply further details to anyone who is interested.

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